surveillance and target acquisition capability; (iii) enhancement of night fighting capability; (iv) upgradation of electronics warfare and information warfare systems.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Do not arise.

(e) The equipping of Commandos is done keeping in mind possible threat scenarios and operational requirements.

Training to IAF Pilots by Nato

4823. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the pilots to the Indian Air Force have got training skills in futuristic air-to-air refilling and "beyond visual range" combat tactics etc. from NATO;

(b) if so, the details of training that the pilots have undergone;

(c) whether Government propose to impart such exercises to its Air Force pilots regularly; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) No. Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Agni III Missiles

4824. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to test fire this year Agni III, a long range surface-to-surface missile, capable of carrying nuclear warheads; and

(b) the special features of Angi III missiles?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) Based on long-term security needs, Government has approved development of Agni-III for a range of 3000 km. The development is in progress and it is likely to be tested in near future. However, no date has been fixed for the first launch.

Inquiry into sleeping bags scam

†4825. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA :
SHRI MOTILAL VORA :
SHRI SATISH PRADHAN :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Parliamentary Committee has recommended that

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

inquiry for the scam in purchase of 'sleeping bags' for the soldiers posted in Siachin, the highest military post in the world, be made by an impartial agency ;

(b) if so, the name of the agency to be assigned by Government with the responsibility of inquiry and by when ;

(c) the steps taken for the proposed inquiry; and

(d) the time schedule by which the concerned agency will be asked to submit its report alongwith the reasons for delay in handing over the work of inquiry to the inquiry agency ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (d) Paragraph 17 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st March, 1998 (No.7 of 1999), Union Government (Defence Services - Army and Ordnance Factories) relating to "Procurement of defective sleeping bags" was selected by the Public Accounts Committee for examination.

2. After examination of the aforesaid Audit Para the Public Accounts Committee presented its forty-sixth Report to Lok Sabha on 13th March, 2003. The Report was laid in Rajya Sabha also on 13th March, 2003. Copies of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee were received in cyclostyled form, without Appendices from the Lok Sabha Secretariat. On being pointed out by the Ministry of Defence that the copies of the Report were without Appendices, complete set in cyclostyled form containing Appendix, has been received from the Lok Sabha Secretariat on 16-4-2003.

3. Apart from making certain other observations/recommendations, the Public Accounts Committee, in concluding paragraph of its Report, has recommended thorough investigation by an Independent Agency. The Committee has desired to be apprised of the action taken thereon within a period of six months.

4. Report of Public Accounts Committee is under active consideration in the Department of Defence in consultation with the Department of Defence Production and Supplies and the Army Headquarters. A decision on the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee to entrust the investigation to an Independent Agency will be taken by the Competent Authority shortly.

5. As explained in para 2 above, a complete set of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee has been received from the Lok Sabha Secretariat on 16-4-2003 only and as such it cannot be said that there is any delay in handing over the work of inquiry to an inquiry agency.